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## **Refugees and the Meaning of Home: Cypriot Narratives of Loss, Longing and Daily Life in London by Helen Taylor**

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facing Turkey in managing migrants without infringing liberty rights. With the EU now set to fund Turkish “take-back” and asylum-processing systems, the issue of detention in Turkey will become a European responsibility.

In summary, the collection provides a rich source of data on immigration detention and gives fascinating insights into “dark corners” of the global detention estate. The effect would have been more powerful if there had been a stronger thematic chapter attempting to develop common themes. This also might have been helpful in trying to explain the

underlying causes for the growth of detention (and its continued abeyance in some countries), which scholarship has not fully addressed. There is an urgent need to understand the political processes that created the system with a view to developing strategies on how to reverse these inhumane and arbitrary practices.

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### *Refugees and the Meaning of Home: Cypriot Narratives of Loss, Longing and Daily Life in London*



Helen Taylor

Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015, 188 pp.

In the past couple of decades, a large body of literature has developed in the social sciences to engage with questions of home and belonging in the context of displacement. A significant part of this work has been committed to challenging established sedentarist perspectives that tend to naturalize the attachment of refugees to their homes left behind. Sedentarism is underpinned by nationalist logics that peoples and cultures belong to clearly defined geographical spaces contained within national borders. Within this framework, repatriation and the return of refugees to their homes and houses are privileged as solutions to displacement. Helen Taylor’s book makes an insightful contribution to these debates through the study of Cypriot refugee narratives of loss, longing, and daily life in London. Taking a “middle ground” approach, Taylor shows very effectively how on the one hand “home” is socially and culturally constructed, and the way it is experienced varies among groups of refugees and individuals. On the other hand, she is cautious not to undermine the role sedentarist meanings of home play in refugees’ pleas for rights and/or return.

Inter- and intra-communal violence in Cyprus in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in mass displacement of mainly Turkish Cypriots from villages, towns, and city districts. In 1974 a Greek-backed coup was followed by a Turkish military operation that resulted in the separation of the island into two parts. The war and the division produced further mass displacement of about 170,000–200,000 Greek Cypriots and 40,000–50,000 Turkish Cypriots. Although there are a large number of studies concerned with the displaced within Cyprus, less attention has been given to those who left the island as a result of their displacement. This book closes this gap by focusing on Greek and Turkish Cypriots

who fled to Britain during and after the violent events. Britain was an obvious choice for many of the displaced, as some had already established family networks there or held British passports after having worked for the colonial administration before Cyprus’s independence in 1960. Although Britain never legally recognized these Cypriots as refugees, Taylor uses the term refugee in a broad definition, not least because it is widely used by her research participants to self-identify.

The book is based on field-work research conducted between 2004 and 2005. This was a significant historical period, as the checkpoints in Cyprus opened in 2003, allowing displaced Cypriots to visit their homes for the first time in almost thirty years. The field-work included participant observation in political and cultural events in London as well as narrative research with twenty-two Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The refugee narratives are a major strength of the book. They allow individual stories and “voices” to emerge and illustrate the overall theme of the work; that home and home-making are multi-layered and complex processes embedded within both broader political and socio-historical processes as well as individual life trajectories and cycles. Indeed, some of the protagonists of the study still maintain a strong connection with the home left behind and struggle to see themselves as fully emplaced in Britain. Others express longing for a life before displacement, but they also acknowledge that they have managed to create a home away from Cyprus. For some of those who went to visit their homes after 2003, the journey consolidated their feelings of loss and displacement and the sense of their town or village as the main site of belonging. For others, visiting long-lost homes destabilized the ways in which such places

had been remembered and strengthened the emphasis on home-making in London.

Each of the main chapters engages with discussions of a different analytical element of home: the spatial home, the temporal home, the material home, and the relational home. Beyond just a concrete physical location, it is clearly demonstrated through biographical narratives and personal accounts that for Cypriot refugees home is multi-faceted, encompassing a house, the village, the island, and often the new house in Britain. Also, refugeeness should not always imply a previous condition of sedentariness. Some Turkish Cypriots had already been displaced and forced to live in enclaves in Cyprus since the 1950s and 1960s. Others had become internal migrants from rural areas to towns and cities long before becoming refugees. Such mobilities make the notion and experience of home far more complex. Beyond spatial accounts of belonging, longing for home also involves longing for a time before loss. One of the most powerful parts of the book describes how Cypriots who visited their places after thirty years realized that even if return to the physical space would ever be possible, a return to a past life as articulated through nostalgic recollections had been lost forever. However, refugees try to make and remake home in their new situations, and chapter 4 illustrates the role of materiality and the senses in how refugees remember and construct a Cypriot home in London through food, gardening, smells, and tastes. Of course, on top of its spatial, temporal, and material elements, home is about social relationships and networks. Refugees have managed to rebuild lost networks and relationships through community associations, cultural centres, and political organizations in London. Others, however, have chosen a looser connection to Cypriot community life and developed alternative types of social and cultural capital. After all, as Taylor discusses, as much as community can be a locus of belonging and reconstructing home “away from home,” it can also be hierarchical, internally divided, and exclusive. Although many refugees long for relationships and social networks that were disrupted when they left Cyprus, London has become

their new relational home where many have now established families with children and grandchildren, friendships and social circles. In a complex turn of events, returning to Cyprus would now jeopardize this relational home and lead to further loss.

Given that the refugee narratives are one of the strongest and most illuminating aspects of the book, there could have been further explanation of how and why these particular research participants were selected. The book includes a useful appendix with a list of the protagonists’ short biographies; however, some of this information could have been integrated more into the text to help contextualize the different “voices” even more constructively and allow the reader to follow life trajectories as well as social connections. Also, the “refugee issue” in Cyprus has been a highly political and politicized topic. It has occupied a central place in state rhetoric and agendas on both sides of the island and has formed a strong negotiating point in the peace talks on the reunification of Cyprus, especially around the themes of return of the refugees and their property. Taylor raises such issues in parts of the book, but a more developed discussion on the history of refugee politics, policies, and rights in Cyprus would have brought to the foreground analyses of economic and property loss that evidently play a role in refugees’ pragmatic strategies and pleas for rights and justice. In spite of a few such missed opportunities, Taylor’s book bridges a considerable gap in the field of Cyprus studies and offers an important case study to the literature on home and belonging. It tells powerfully a painful but at the same time heartwarming story of refugees’ resilience—not in the often-used sense of the term as individualized coping strategies and success, but as an ultimately social mode of (re)building relationships and home.

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### *Contesting Immigration Policy in Court: Legal Activism and Its Radiating Effects in the United States and France*



Leila Kavar

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 232 pp.

**L**eila Kavar’s book is an innovative extension of Bruno Latour’s method of studying how scientists make knowledge in laboratories to how lawyers create law

through daily practice. She argues that legal contestation reshapes how power arrangements affect the law and policy-making, which in turn has radiating effects. Put differently,